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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPENSATION DIVISION

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MAY 31 1973



The Honorable
The Secretary of Defense

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We have completed a survey of the military services' nonresident training programs. Our prime interest was to determine how these programs are managed and used. Most of our information came from questionnaires sent to 35 nonresident training schools and from detailed data on the Army's nonresident programs.

The enrollment, completions, and cost for each service during fiscal year 1972 follow.

<u>Service</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Completions</u>	<u>Cost</u> (millions)
Army	238,400	50,100	\$11.8
Navy	86,900	42,100	1.7
Air Force	338,500	204,400	4.1
Marine Corps	<u>122,700</u>	<u>62,400</u>	<u>1.8</u>
Total	<u>786,500</u>	<u>359,000</u>	<u>\$19.4</u>

Nonresident training programs need (1) to have a uniform policy on completion goals, (2) to avoid course duplication, (3) to improve cost reporting, and (4) to consider consolidating the Army's administrative functions. These points tend to support observations by the House Armed Services Committee in its 1972 hearings. The Committee noted a lack of training cost information and the need to consolidate training to reduce costs. Therefore we are advising you of our observations at this time so you can give these matters prompt attention.

One of the major purposes for the nonresident programs is to provide skill training to those unable to participate in

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resident courses. Completion rates indicate a measure of the effectiveness of the program in providing this training. The degree of effectiveness seems to relate directly to the extent that each service emphasizes course completion and monitors student progress. For example, the Marine Corps has a completion goal of 90 percent and aggressively monitors student progress. It reported a 69-percent completion rate for fiscal year 1972. On the other hand, the Army does not have completion goals and does not aggressively monitor student progress. It reported a completion rate of only 28 percent. The Army's philosophy is that nonresident training courses make information available to enrollees; consequently, the Army is not concerned with completion rates. We believe that, when nonresident training is substituted for resident courses, the services should establish completion goals and monitor the progress of enrollees.

Correspondence courses are duplicated among the services. The services' catalogs list a wide range of courses describing similar subjects and content, such as basic electricity, mathematics, vehicle maintenance, food preparation, and plumbing. Also most service schools do not review the courses available through other services before developing new courses. Therefore we believe more effective control is needed to avoid this duplication. The services could exchange common subjects and could review the others' courses before developing new ones.

Management does not receive needed reliable data on the cost of nonresident training. For example, an Army school responding to our questionnaire stated that its program cost was \$679,000 for fiscal year 1972. However, this did not include an estimated \$400,000 for salaries of course writers, data processing services, and mailing costs, which brought the total cost to about \$1.1 million. Further, the school had reported to higher headquarters that the program cost was only \$589,000. These differences indicate that better procedures are needed to identify and report all costs incurred.

The organization of the Army correspondence program results in duplication of administrative functions. Most of the Army's 25 correspondence schools independently process applications, maintain student records, and grade lessons and exams. In contrast, the other services have more centralized these activities. We believe the Army should consider making a study to determine whether consolidation of administrative functions would be more economical and practical.